

THE BABE

OF

BETHLEHEM

BEING

SOME CHRISTMAS CAROLS

WRITTEN BY THE REVEREND

G. R. WOODWARD, M. A.

AND PRINTED BY THE SAME AT

48 WEST HILL, HIGHGATE VILLAGE

A. D. 1923

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TO THE MEMORY OF HIS FATHER
GEORGE RATCLIFFE WOODWARD
AND OF HIS MOTHER
ANNE DEVILLE WOODWARD



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THE
BABE OF BETHLEHEM

I

O Saviour, rent the heavens in twain

O Saviour, rent the heav'ns in twain ; 1
Descend, descend from thy domain :
Burst lock and latchet of the bowers
Of thine eternal princely towers.

Drop down, O God, from heav'n as dew, 2
In show'rs, O Saviour, Lord Jesu :
Thou welkin, break ; rain, rain, and bring
To Jacob house the promised King.

O earth, earth, earth, bud forth anew : 3
Deck dale and down with verdant hue :
Bring beauteous Blossom to the birth ;
O Saviour, upward spring from earth.

Why stay'ft thou, comfort of our race, 4
On whom our every hope we place ?
Draw nigh from thy celestial spheres,
To glad us in this vale of tears.

O shining Sun, O Morn-star bright, 5
We should behold thee with delight :
Clear Orb, arise ; without thy rays
In darknefs all we pass our days.

Here suffer we in doleful wise ; 6
Death, endless death, afore our eyes :
But come lead thou with mighty hand
Us exiles to our native land.

II

Ye clouds, be-rain our thirsty plain

YE clouds be-rain our thirsty plain; 1
 Drop down with dew supernal!
 For from on high there draweth nigh
 The King of blifs eternal.

The Lord of ay is born to-day 2
 Of Mary maiden holy,
 And lull'd to rest upon her breast
 Within a shippon lowly.

Ye feers, and quires of reverend fires, 3
 Come skip on this glad morrow!
 For Christ, the Truth in very sooth,
 In this our glen of sorrow,

By his sweet birth, of priceless worth, 4
 [And he is King of ages]
 Now verifies the prophecies
 Of your far-fighted pages.

Fast barr'd of yore, now evermore, 5
 Fair Eden, ope thy portals,
 Beholding Christ, the Lord most high'ft,
 Array'd in flesh of mortals,

And by a Maiden Mother laid 6
 [So mighty was his pity
 For finners all] within a stall
 In little Bethlem city.

III

Open thy door, gentle hosteler,

OPEN thy door, gentle hosteler, 1
 Undo the bolt, and the pin;
 For the snow-flake and the fleet
 Are a-falling in the street,
 And harbour we crave in thine inn.

- Late is the hour, mirk and chill the night: 2
 Wherefore, with other our kin,
 Hither summon'd, e'en as we,
 By Augustus his decree,
 Prithee lodge us inside thine inn.
- Out of a city in Galilee 3
 Came we by mountain and linn :
 'Tis the fourth sun-fet to-day
 Sith we fet out on our way,
 And we seek rest inside this inn.
- Old man am I, and with flaxen poll : 4
 But young is my Ladykin.
 Soon will she (that meek and mild)
 Be deliver'd of a child :
 Wherefore let us inside the inn.
- Hungry and thirfty, way-worn we be, 5
 And fain would pay, for to win
 Bed and board, an so we might,
 On this bleak December night,
 View the fire in the Bethlehem inn.
- Joseph and Mary, God rest you well ! 6
 But why un-bar bolt and pin ?
 For my house is full ; and tho'
 I be loth to say you No,
 Ne'er a room for you hath mine inn.

III

Far & wide all the earth

FAr & wide all the earth is fulfillèd wi' gladness,
 Viewing God from above in this valley o' sadness:
 Lo ! the gifts that the Kings out of Orient bear me,
 While the heavens by tongue of a starlet declare me.
 Angel armies in worship are caroling o'er me; 2
 Fro' the land the good herdmen in wonder adore me :
 For a fiery throne, I am laid in a manger :
 Mother, sing ; for ye see me on earth here a stranger.

V

O Jesu, Star of Bethlehem,

O Jesu, Star of Bethlehem, 1
 Bedew'd with heav'nly shower :
 O Christmas Rose, of Jesse Stem;
 O matchless Lily Flower :
 O Crown Imperial from the bow'rs,
 That never fade nor vary :
 O Snow-drop, to this world of ours
 Display'd by Maiden Mary,
 Thine Advent here converteth drear 2
 December into May-day.
 So on thy birth sing I for mirth,
 As school-boy on a play-day ;
 This only grieving me, alas !
 That many folk forget thee,
 Outside the inn, mid ox and ass,
 Content, my God, to fet thee.

VI

Our Lady sat within her bower

O Ur Lady sat within her bow'r, 1
 And sweetly sang from hour to hour,
 La-lulla-lu:
Ho! Rest thee, my Bairn, and my God thereto;
 La-lulla, Babe Jesu!
 In reverent wife, with holy hands, 2
 She wrapt the Child in swathing bands.
 But, as she sung the glad refrain, 3
 Her tears gan trickle fast as rain.
 A wonder sight it was to see 4
 How Mary rockt him on her knee,
 And bade him rest, and stint his weep, 5
 Who giveth his belovèd sleep.

VII

I saw a sweet & seemly sight

I Saw a sweet and seemly sight, 1
 A bliffful Burd, a Blossom bright :
 A Maiden-Mother, meek and mild,
 Had cradled Christ, her comely Child.
 He softly slept : she sat and sung, 2
 Mid mirth and mourning ever among,
 ‘By-by, my bonnie Bairn, y-born
 Full fain to free thy folk forlorn.’

VIII

Hail! Eternal Son, to-day

Hail! Eternal Son, to-day 1
 Born of Mary maiden ay;
 Straw thy bed, thy pillow hay.

*Eya, eya, eya ;
 Domini natalia
 Recolat ecclesia.*

Angel-army, found your horn, 2
 Chanting on this holy morn,
 ‘God in Bethlehem is born.’

*Eya, eya, eya ;
 In excelsis gloria :
 In terris concordia.*

Shine in Eastern sky, thou Star, 3
 Pointing to that house afar,
 Wherein Babe and Mother are.

*Eya, eya, eya ;
 Puer idem varia
 Fecit luminaria.*

Hitherward! Ye Princes iij, 4
 Worship him. Though poor he be,
 Lord, and King of kings is he.

*Eya, eya, eya ;
 In celesti patria
 Vestræ fors palacia.*

IO THE BABE OF BETHLEHEM

Herdmen, leave your flocks, and run 5
 To adore the Holy One,
 God, the Father's only Son.

*Eya, eya, eya;
 Qui creavit omnia,
 Eius haec solempnia.*

Afs, with ox that hauleth plow, 6
 Fore thy Master, cradled now
 In the manger, bend and bow.

*Eya, eya, eya;
 Inter animalia
 Patrem parit filia.*

Joseph, many of high degree, 7
 King and Seer, have long'd to see
 Whom thou seeft on Mary's knee.

*Eya, eya, eya;
 Deus, tuos visita,
 Et nobiscum habita.*

Now, good people, all of ye, 8
 Magnify, with maid Marie,
 Christ and his Nativitie.

*Eya, eya, eya;
 Sociate musica
 Christi Natalitia.*

IX

Though chill the night & airy

THough chill the night and airy, 1
 Go, herdmen, quit the prairie :
 Greet the Son, the Holy One,
 The King of ages, born of Mary.

V̇. Leave your ewes aneath the fell, 2
 Nor fear the wolf from off the mountain :
 Speed to Bethlem, past the well,
 Whence Davy drew, old Jesse's Fountain. **Rz.**

- V̄. There the Child, fore-seen of old 3
 By bards in true prophetick story,
 Him a Maiden's arms enfold,
 The Saviour Christ, the Lord of glory. R̄z.
- V̄. In a shed where cattle stand, 4
 The heav'nly Babe, there shall ye find him :
 In a cratch, with swathing band
 The Ever-Virgin she doth wind him. R̄z.
- V̄. 'Glory be to God on high,' 5
 To-day the Angel-host is singing :
 'Peace on earth, good-will,' they cry :
 So, Church-men, set your bells a-ringing.
- R̄z. And though the night be airy,
 Go, like them of the prairie,
 Hail that God, this globe who trod,
 And born was of our Lady Mary.

X

Rejoice, ye babes around the coast

- R** Ejoice, ye babes around the coast 1
 (*Laetetur concio*)
 Of Bethlehem, a blameless host.
 (*Laetetur chorus hodie :*
 Laetetur puerorum chorus hodie
 Canticorum canticis).
- Fear not : if Herod play you rough, 2
 Anon it shall be smooth enough.
- Be of good cheer : this royal sport 3
 Shall bring you blifs with good report.
- For henceforth ne'er a year shall pass 4
 Without your Feast of Childermas.
- The King of kings doth send from far 5
 [To fet you home] a triumph-car.
- 'Tis deckt with lilies, palms of price, 6
 And roses, fresh from Paradise.

The Gold-smith there in gold doth mount Rich rubies on your each account.	7
To-day ye shall be wiser far Than agèd folk, your teachers, are.	8
So momentary struggle spurn, Eternal knighthood thus to earn.	9
No weeping! Quit your cots, to gain, By bill and brand, this triumph-wain.	10
Hark, Herod's henchmen! Babes, arise, Make Martyr-Crown and Palm your prize!	11

XI

The Holy Innocents to-day

T He Holy Innocents to-day Demand of Faithful quires a lay.	1
With gladsome voice and heart aglow <i>Benedicamus Domino.</i>	2
The little folk, by Herod slain, Are call'd by Christ to life again.	3
So sweetly we at Childermas Make answer <i>Deo gracias.</i>	4

XII

Jesus is the sweetest Name, Set

J Esus is the sweetest Name Set to rime or metre : Honey-comb beside the same Gall is to the eater : Man or Angel, who can frame Sound that soundeth sweeter?	1
This, by many a king and seer Long'd for, but withholden, By Archangel to a clear Virgin was unfolden. JESUS : Be it far and near Writ in letter golden.	2

JESU, Lord of Nazareth,
 Hymn'd by quire supernal,
 Hated, and with bated breath,
 Own'd by powers infernal,
 Lead us mortals, after death,
 Up to joy eternal.

XIII

Jesus is the sweetest Name, That

JESUS is the sweetest Name 1
 That heart can fancy, tongue can frame,
 Reveal'd to Mary in her cell
 At Nazareth by Gabriel,
 Whereto every knee, every knee,
 Shall bow in all humility.

On the eight day, when they came 2
 To give the heavenly Child his Name,
 'Let call him JESUS,' Mary cried :
 'Amen,' said Joseph at that tide ;
 'Because from thy yoke, from thy yoke,
 O sin, the Babe shall save his folk.'

JESUS is the Name full well 3
 Bedreaded and abhorr'd in hell ;
 But JESUS is the theme and boast
 Of Christen men and Angel host.
 So sing we and say, sing and say,
 'All glory to thy Name to-day !'

XIII

King Herod, troubled with the Star,

KING Herod, troubled with the Star, 1
 That led the Eastern Sages
 To view the Babe, whose goings are
 Before the birth of ages,
 Grew mighty wroth because the Kings,
 Returning not, did jape him :

He therefore bade his underlings,
 (Left Jesu should escape him)
 Hew and hack, hack, hack,
 Hew and hack afunder
 All baby boys nigh Bethlehem
 From ij year old and under.
 In Ramah, Rachel, weep no more, 2
 But let thy joy be mickle :
 For, though thy pretty buds be shore
 By Death's unruthful sickle,
 They are but taken to the land
 Of everlasting flowers :
 Where Christ, as gardener, hath command
 Of amarantine bowers.
 Wherefore sing, sing, sing, sing,
 Wherefore sing for gladness;
 Because for Paradise thy bairns
 Have left this vale of sadness.

XV

There camen iij Kingès from lands afar

THere camen iij Kingès from lands afar, 1
 Led West-ward by a wonderful Star.
 'Twas many a league over dale and down 2
 Before they enter'd Bethlehem town.
 But ne'er did iij Wise men a wiser thing 3
 Than when they worshipt Jesus as King,
 And when, for to honour him, each cast down 4
 Fore Mary's Babe his sceptre and crown,
 Returning frankincense with myrrh and gold 5
 To him, who giveth whatever we hold.
 So we, if true Gentiles, will ne'er refuse 6
 Our homage to Jesus, King of the Jews.

XVI

Child in the manger

- C**Hild, in the manger 1
 Some time in danger
 From the alarm and fury
 Of the unrightful,
 Godless, and spiteful
 Herod, supreme o'er Jewry,
 Many a filly 2
 Babe, willy-nilly,
 Two year of age and under,
 Was from his brother,
 Sifter, fire, mother,
 Taken and torn afunder.
 When the foe fought thee, 3
 Hither we brought thee,
 Thanks to thine Angel-warning
 In the night-season :
 We with good reason
 Gat us away ere morning.
 Babe, as we bore thee 4
 South-ward, afore thee
 Many an idol, cherish'd,
 Worshipt, and wreathen
 By the poor heathen,
 Fell from his throne, and perish'd.
 Once, from these regions, 5
 Came forth, in legions,
 Israel's sons and daughters,
 [After thy thunders,
 Plagues, and ten wonders]
 Safe through the Red Sea waters.
 So, my fair Jewel, 6
 Be Herod cruel,
 Here shall no ill betide us :
 So, my rare Beryl,
 Here is no peril,
 If thou but be beside us.

XVII

Although at Yule it bloweth cool

- A**lthouth at Yule it bloweth cool, 1
 And frost doth grip the fingers,
 And nip the nose, and numb the toes,
 Of out-door Carol-fingers,
- Through snow or fleet we pace the street, 2
 Fair firs, with right good reason,
 To wish you all, both great and small,
 The blessings of the season.
- We think to spell 'Good news, Nowell, 3
 And eke a wonder story :
 The Virgin mild hath borne the Child :
 E'en God, the King of Glory.'
- We come to tell how once, o'er dell 4
 And down, in winter-weather,
 Led with a star, from lands afar
 There rid iij kings together.
- By thoroughfare, through slum or square, 5
 Our Quire the praise rehearset
 (As on we pass) of 'Wenceslas'
 That 'Good king', and his mercies.
- Then we can sing, a pretty thing, 6
 'The Holly and Ivy berry ;'
 But best we ken 'Good gentle men,
 God rest you, rest you merry.'
- 'This hind'rest night I saw a sight:' 7
 'A Virgin all unspotted,'
 Ne'er be these lays of olden days
 Out of remembrance blotted.
- So 'Blessed be that Maid Marie,' 8
 To spurn it 'twere a pity ;
 Nor let men scorn 'A Babe is born
 In Bethlehem,' David city.
- [No itching palms have we for alms, 9
 Content if Christ, the burden

Of these our lays, bestow his praise,
 And one day be our guerdon.
 That hallow'd dome, Saint Dunstan's Home, 10
 Doth harbour many blind folk,
 To whom we pay the coin that may
 Be handed us by kind folk.]
 The strain, y-clept 'While shepherds kept,' 11
 This also might be sung ye;
 But here an end. Us Christ defend,
 And alway be among ye!

XVIII

Hob & Colin, Yule is come,

HOb and Colin, Yule is come, 1
 Calling for your fife and drum;
 If ye strike up, as ye can,
 Túrelurelú, patapatapán,
 I will carol; so will Jan
 With a lassie, Joan or Nan.
 Thus men gave, in olden days, 2
 To the Prince of princes, praise:
 Wherefore, an ye like my plan,
 Turelurelu, patapatapan,
 Drefs your drum-stick, you; and span,
 You, your reed, my piper Pan.
 Christmas tolls the devil's knell; 3
 Thankèd be Emmanuel.
 So, from England to Japan,
 Turelurelu, patapatapan,
 Whether town or country man,
 Sing it, ring it, ran-tan-ran.
 God and man accordant are: 4
 Not so, fife and drum; ye jar.
 Yet nought would I sooner than
 Turelurelu, patapatapan.
 Fore our Lady and Saint Ann,
 'Tis high time the thing began.

XIX

A Galley will I build me

- A** Galley will I build me, 1
 A brave ship, and a fine :
 With rudder, oar, and main-fail,
 And cros-tree mast, of pine.
- Now who shall be my skipper? 2
 Jesus, my lover kind;
 Will save my barque from ship-wreck,
 According to his mind.
- Our Lady she must steer it, 3
 Saint Mary, Virgin-queen,
 Fraught with her heavenly burthen,
 The Pearl of price, I mean.
- And whom to choofe for pilot? 4
 My guiding Angel-star
 Shall see his convoy safely
 In port across the bar.
- So shall my gallant Galley 5
 Arrive at that fair coast,
 Where reigneth God, the Father,
 The Son, the Holy Ghost.

XX

Babe Jesu, hear our ditty

- B**abe Jesu, hear our ditty, 1
 And think thereof no scorn :
 We pray thee of thy pity,
 On this December morn.
 On thee we call,
 Who wert, in Bethlem city,
 Of maiden Mary born;
 Yea, born for all.

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EXPLANATORY NOTES

¶ *As in Carols for Yule-tide, the peculiar measures, rhythms, & rimes of some of these Carols are to be accounted for by the Editor's continued & honest endeavour to preserve the integrity of the ancient melodies to which alone, respectively, they should be sung.*

¶ *Where not original, the words are either close translations, or else free adaptations of older material, Greek, Latin, &c.*

¶ *Again, in the process of imposing & printing off of the Carols, the Author has been aided by his friend, Mr. A. Oliver.*

¶ *The Edition consists of but 200 Copies, whereof this impression is Number 8 .*

ΘΕΟΣ ΕΦΑΝΕΡΩΘΗ ΕΝ ΣΑΡΚΙ



*“Now go we forth, and see this wondrous thing,”
The Shepherds said, “and seek the new-born King
In Bethlehem.”*

